

KJ's Retro Hearts

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/14710622) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/14710622>.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Fandom:	The Avengers (Marvel Movies) , Spider-Man: Homecoming (2017) , Marvel Cinematic Universe
Relationship:	Peter Parker & Tony Stark
Character:	Tony Stark , Peter Parker , Steve Rogers , Clint Barton , Natasha Romanov (Marvel) , James "Rhodey" Rhodes , Bruce Banner , Wanda Maximoff , Vision (Marvel)
Additional Tags:	Pre-Captain America: Civil War (Movie) , Parent Tony Stark , Homelessness , Domestic Avengers , Arcades , Peter is adorable , Peter Parker Needs a Hug , Tony Stark Has A Heart , Foster Care , Dad!Tony , Bruce Banner never left
Collections:	ellie marvel fics - read , Marvel(ous)Universe , The Best Irondad/Spiderson Fics , The Best Peter Parker Whump Fics , The Best of the Best MCU Fics
Stats:	Published: 2018-05-20 Completed: 2018-07-12 Chapters: 9/9 Words: 18235

KJ's Retro Hearts

by [Jungle321jungle](#)

Summary

Tony Stark went to play arcade games and blow off steam, he ended up with a kid instead. And despite regretting many of the split decisions he's made in life, he would never regret Peter Parker.

Notes

This is pre-civil war, and the avengers never moved upstate.

One

One

Tony didn't always blow off steam inside his suit, in his workshop, or even in bottle of booze. He did those things often enough.

No to blow off steam he'd simply head a few blocks away from the tower to a little place where quarters meant mindless hours of fun.

KJ's Fun Zone had been there for years, but the first time he had gone it had only been to duck out of the rain for a second and call Happy so he wouldn't have to get his new suit drenched before a meeting. Either way he had stepped in the arcade, which had been empty at the time, to find games both new and retro. He found himself drifting toward a PacMan machine and couldn't resist the urge to play. He only played for a short period time, but managed to get just below the high score (he could've gotten higher if Happy hadn't dragged him away).

So *naturally* he had to go back to beat the high score. And soon enough he was going there regularly, and he knew almost everyone who walked in that door and whose initials were on the leaderboard for each game.

So when he didn't recognize the "PP" displayed as the top score on his beloved PacMan machine he walked over to counter where the owner, a tall dark skinned woman named Lee, was rearranging some of the prizes.

Lee glanced over at him and he saw her roll her green eyes, "Are you finally cashing in your tickets or are you gonna hold onto them for another year Mr. S?"

"Someone stole my spot," Tony informed her.

"Win it back," Lee shrugged.

"But I gotta know, who's PP? I don't recognize it? I gotta size up my competition."

“Well there’s not much to size up, kid’s tiny.”

“So you admit it!” Tony said shaking his head. “You admit that let someone steal my spot? Oh Lee, I should tell your father you’re not doing your job.”

“We both know he’d tell you to fuck off, and let him enjoy his retirement.”

Tony shrugged knowing she was right, but bothering KJ was a form of entertainment.

“But no seriously who is PP?”

Lee gave him a smirk, “I rather let you figure it out.”

Tony stepped back and pointed at her a response on his tongue when his phone rang. “This isn’t over,” He told her.

“See ya Mr. S!”

Tony answered his phone and headed out of KJ’s just as a boy walked in and up to Lee.

“Hey Peter,” she greeted.

“Was that Tony Stark?” He asked her eyes still on the door where the man had been.

“Who did you think TS was?” Lee laughed. “He is very upset you beat his record. Now help me out for a bit then go beat another one of his.”

~~~~~

After a few weeks Tony was still yet to see the notorious “PP” in person, but he saw the initials pop up ahead of his on more and more of the games.

“Damnit!” Tony shouted after failing to beat the score once more. He could hear the sound of Lee’s laughter come from somewhere, defeated he rounded the corner and decided to try his luck on another game only to spy a boy playing Terminator Salvation.

He didn’t recognize the boy, he had brown hair, and he was skinny with clothes which were too big for him and a bit dirty. Tony stepped behind him as the boy played, he was doing well, scarily well. Tony silently kept his eyes on the score wondering if his would be beat. But the game ended just hundred points shy.

“Damn second again,” the boy sighed as he entered his initials.

Tony’s eyes widened, “Your PP?”

The boy let out a yelp and turned quickly to look at him. His eyes were wide with confusion and his mouth opened a few times before he spoke, “Uh- Yeah... I’m PP, Mr. Ironman- Mr. Tony Stark uh-”

“You’ve been beating a lot of my scores PP,” Tony told him.

“I’m sorry,” he said quickly.

Tony shook his head and stepped forward putting a few quarters in the machine and picked up one of the guns. “Grab the other.”

“W-what?”

“We’ve got the top scores, let’s see how 2 player goes.”

PP scrambled to do so as the game began.

“What’s your name PP?” Tony asked him after a few minutes of silence other than the game.

“Peter sir. Peter Parker.”

“Nice to meet you Peter, Tony Stark.”

“I know.”

“Yeah, well it’s conventional to introduce yourself anyway,” Tony shrugged.

Despite the two them setting the record on the game Peter seldom spoke, but Tony didn’t give it much thought. Though the more Tony bumped into Peter the more he learned about the boy, and the more the boy spoke to him.

~~~~~

“Do you ever go to school Pete?”

“Hi Mr. Stark,” Peter replied not looking away from his game of Skee-ball.

“Well do you?”

“I’m-I’m homeschooled,” Peter answered. “I come here to get a break from it.”

“You must get a lot of breaks.”

Peter nodded mutely as he rolled another ball.

“He’s a street kid,” Lee told Tony later. “I give him food and some money and he helps me out with cleaning and he’s really good with the maintenance of the games... Not that my father approves me helping him.”

Tony shrugs, “Well if it means anything I think it’s a nice thing to do.”

Lee smiled, “It doesn’t but thanks anyway.”

Tony heard his phone go off and he sighed and gave Lee a wave as he moved toward the door.
“I’ve got meetings to be late for.”

“Bye Mr. S!”

~~~~~

Tony hadn’t gone to KJ’s in weeks and he felt the need to. His hands were itching to hit colorful buttons and let loose. To do something other than work. With that thought in mind he dropped his gauntlet on the table and left the workshop heading for the arcade. He was a block away when he noticed the familiar brown hair on top of a skinny body with a backpack slung over one shoulder walking toward him.

“Peter!” He called hurrying a bit to catch up.

The boy responded to the sound of his name and his eyes searched until he found Tony to which he gave a wave.

“Hey kid, headed to KJ’s?” Tony greeted walking up to him.

The kid shook his head then stopped suddenly his eyebrows scrunched together as if the action pained him, “Lee’s been out of town for the past week, I’m going to the library.”

Tony frowned, “Well there go my plans. Hm, maybe I’ll grab something to eat. You wanna come?”

The boy’s mouth opened and closed soundlessly before he spoke, “Oh no I couldn’t- you’re busy. I don’t wanna get in the way and stuff.”

“A teenager turning down free food? You feeling okay.”

“Yes?”

“Come on Pete, *free food*.”

Peter stated at him as if trying to think of ways to argue, but finding none he nodded.

They ended up going to a small sub shop and sat inside to eat them. Well Peter practically inhaled his.

“You want another?” Tony offered when Peter finished.

The boy turned a shade of bright pink as he raised his hands to shake them, “No! I mean thank you! But no I’m good. I still have this bag of chips anyway.”

“You sure?”

“Positive,” he nodded reaching for his soda.

Tony was about to ask him something when he couldn’t help but notice a bruise on the boy’s arm.

“You haven’t been to KJ’s in a while,” Peter stated taking a sip.

Tony shifted his attention to Peter’s face and shrugged, “Yeah I’ve been working on the suit. More specifically I’m trying to increase the output of my gauntlets by...” Tony went on explaining- well more thinking out loud (or rambling). He honestly forgot about Peter for a moment as he went on until Peter spoke.

Tony stopped short mid sentence and looked at him, “What?”

“Well if you can change the refraction rate shouldn’t it fix that problem so you can move on to increasing the entire output?”

Tony blinked and stared at this kid in front of him, as he silently wondered how the kid knew that and if it work. As his mind raced Peter watched him silently eating his chips.

“That could work,” Tony said finally. “Thanks kid.”

Peter blushed slightly, “I didn’t do anything...”

“Where’d you learn about all of this stuff?” Tony asked him.

Peter shrugged, “I go to the library a lot. I like science.”

Tony nodded slowly, “Well maybe I’ll bring you to the workshop one day. See if you can help me out with other stuff. I’m sure you’d get along with Bruce too.”

“Bruce as in Bruce Banner?” Peter marveled. “He’s a genius!”

“So am I,” Tony said taking another bite of his sandwich.

“Well of course!” Peter said quickly. “You both are! It’s just I see you all the time. Not that it means you’re any different I just meant-”

“It’s fine kid, I’m only messing with ya.” Tony told him before he glanced at the time. “Well I’m gonna head out Pete, see if I can put your idea to use while it’s fresh.”

Peter nodded and gave him a wave as he left, “Thanks for the food Mr. Stark!”

~~~~~

“I wonder what those are made of,” Tony commented looking at Lee’s iPad on the counter.

“What what’s made of?” Lee asked him still watching the video.

“His webs.”

Lee rolled her eyes, “Leave to you to see a video of Spider-Man fighting off six guys and your thoughts are on his webs.”

“It’s valid.”

“No it’s not.”

“I’m sure Peter would agree with me.”

Lee rolled her eyes, “I have no clue what either of you talk about most of the time.”

Tony glanced around the empty arcade, “Where’s the kid anyway?”

Lee shrugged, “Haven’t seen him today. Or yesterday either.”

“Isn’t he usually here everyday?”

“Yeah, he hasn’t been in here for a few days,” Lee frowned. “It’s kind of weird not to see him. But I have no way of contacting him. He has my number, but he doesn’t have a phone so I don’t have his.”

“I’m sure he’ll turn up. He kind of lives off the money you give him, since he won’t take anything I give him... unless it’s food.”

“He doesn’t like to feel like a burden... You know despite it being months since he first walked in here, I still don’t know where he goes at night? I’ve tried asking him, following him, but no dice. He just seems to vanish.”

“He vanishes?”

Lee sighed, “Apparently. I never pushed it too much because I was afraid he’d run off. He did that a few times in the beginning.”

“Well if I see him I’ll be sure to tell him you’re waiting for him.”

“Please do.”

~~~~~

Tony didn’t see Peter anywhere, though then again it wasn’t like he actively looked. He intended to when Lee has mentioned it, confused as to how a fourteen year old kid could vanish at random points in time, but then came work and Peter fell to the back of his mind. It had only been two days after all.

But then it was a week, and at this point Lee was close to convinced Peter has run off, Tony didn’t voice it but he agreed.

It was certainly strange at KJ’s without Peter, and without him Tony’s high scores no longer had no competition. But he kept going to KJ’s, because the arcade was his home away from home and Lee didn’t mind his company. It was just like the way it was before Peter appeared, but even so it didn’t feel normal. Peter had become an extension of KJ’s and Tony assumed it would take him about a month to officially forget the boy entirely.

Only a month.

~~~~~

F.R.I.D.A.Y. woke him up at an ungodly hour.

“What is it?” Tony groaned.

“Miss Lee Jacobs is on the phone for you sir,” The AI stated.

“At 3 am?”

“Yes sir.”

Tony gave a sigh and sat up grabbing his phone and answering it, “Do you know what time it is Lee?”

“I do and I’m sorry to wake you up but it’s an emergency,” Lee’s voice said in a hurried whisper.

“What kind of an emergency?”

“I woke up cause heard someone downstairs,” Lee whispered. “And I’m not stupid so I’m not gonna go investigate. You’re Ironman and you live a few blocks away so you’ll be faster than the cops.”

“I’ll be right there.”

~~~~~

He was faster than the cops.

When he arrived the dark arcade look just like that. He looked up at the windows assuming Lee is behind one, then turns his attention to the front door. It’s clear it was broken into but it was hard to tell with what. He pushed it open and glanced around at first seeing nothing amiss.

“There’s one heat signature on the ground toward the back,” F.R.I.D.A.Y. informed him. Tony headed in the indicated direction three sharply turned a corner ready to blast whomever was there.

But the figure on the ground didn’t move.

And when the lights revealed the figures' face Tony's heart skipped a beat. "*Peter?*"

## Two

### Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

## Two

Tony stepped out of his suit and knelt beside the boy unsure if it was even a good idea to move him. Half of Peter's face seemed to be one large bruise, with an array of cuts and dried blood. On top of that one of his arms was bent in a way it shouldn't be, and most likely had other broken bones on top of that.

Sirens met Tony's ears and he took a deep breath, and pulled out his phone to tell Lee.

~~~~

Peter had multiple broken bones it seemed. Aside from his arm he had a few broken ribs, and multiple fractures in one of his legs.

"What did he kid get into?" Tony mumbled to himself as he sat in the waiting room.

"That's gonna be one of the first things I ask him when he wakes up," Lee stated.

Tony glanced at her, she was still in her pajamas and her leg bounced nervously as her eyes kept flickering to her phone. "You can go," he told her. "I know your dad is sick and needs you around."

"But Peter-"

"I'll handle it."

Lee didn't look convinced but she nodded as she stood, "Thanks Mr. S."

By morning Tony was bored and tired of sitting in that chair. He needed to stretch his legs and on a

whim he put on his suit and flew up above the hospital settling on the roof and watching everything from below.

“There’s a call from Ms. Potts,” F.R.I.D.A.Y. announced.

“Put her through.”

“Are you actually capable of remembering when you have meetings?” Pepper asked him.

“I am,” Tony responded. “I didn’t forget, I’m just not going. Mind rescheduling for me?”

“Everyone is already here Tony. You want me to tell them to leave?”

“Yeah, it will be the same as when you used to kick people out during my parties.”

“You need to- Of course I’m coming, one moment- I’ll just do it without you,” She decided hanging up.

With the conversation short lived Tony turned his attention back to the streets below where movement caught his eye.

Someone was *climbing out the hospital window?*

He was about to fly down and see what’s going on when a web shot out and the person- *Spider-Man* swung away. Tony hesitated, would it be okay to leave Peter alone while he went to satisfy his own curiosity? After a moment of debating he decided to go on ahead, he wouldn’t be gone long, and Peter was unconscious anyway after all. So with those thoughts in mind he flew off toward Spider-Man.

Spider-Man hadn’t got very far. It seemed rather than his swinging from building to building, he stopped on the roof of one and wasn’t going to continue. Tony flew down and he saw the vigilante scramble out of sight down the side of the building. When he got a bit closer he could see Spider-Man wasn’t even wearing his usual makeshift suit, but rather a pair of pants (which were on backwards) and a hospital gown. One of his legs and one of his arms were in casts but that didn’t

seem to bother him as he lowered himself to a balcony but didn't turn to face Tony.

"H-Hi Mr. Stark," a voice mumbled and Tony's heart skipped a beat as he recognized it.

"Peter!" Tony yelled shocked. "You need to be in the hospital!"

"No, no I'm good," Peter protested turning sharply and he seemed to get a bit dizzy by the action. He grabbed on the railing before him to steady himself before he spoke. "I know I don't look like I'm making a good case, but I'm perfectly fine, really. I heal fast."

Tony stared at him trying to wonder what on Earth could make the boy think he was in anyway fine, half his face was covered in bandages. "I'm taking you back."

"No! I'm not going back there!"

"Yes you are, this isn't up for discussion."

"But-"

"Nope." Tony moved closer to Peter to grab him but the boy scrambled over the railing and began climbing down the building.

"Peter!" Tony called going after him.

"You can't just shout my secret identity!" Peter yelled up at him as he pointed to the next building and a web shot out which Peter swung on.

Tony watched him, he could grab Peter easily, but he wasn't sure dragging the boy back to the hospital kicking and screaming would be the best of ideas. He'd probably just run off again when Tony turned his back. "Why don't you wanna go back?" Tony asked when he flew up to the roof Peter had paused on looking out of breath.

"I'm not going back into the system!" Peter declared. "No way in *hell*!"

“Why not?”

“Because.”

Tony crossed his arms and drummed his fingers, as he thought. Finally he spoke, “How about I make you a deal kid?”

Peter looked more frustrated than interested, but he took the bait either way, “What kind of deal?”

“Come back to the hospital with me, and until you’re mostly healed I’ll keep CPS away. Deal?”

“You can do that?”

“I’m Ironman kid. If I can fight aliens I can deal with them.”

Peter mumbled something he didn’t catch, but it was clear he relented. Tony moved closer and this time Peter didn’t protest so Tony picked him up as carefully as he could and headed back to the hospital.

~~~~~

“So how did Spider-Man come about?” Tony asked Peter the next day when they both sat alone in the room.

Peter looked away from flipping through the hospital’s TV channels to Tony’s face, “I got bit by a radioactive spider.”

Tony blinked, he wasn’t sure what he expected, but that wasn’t it. “So you got bit and now you’ve got super strength, can stick to walls and shoot webs?”

Peter shook his head, “Not exactly. I can do those other things but I uh, I made the web fluid and

the web shooters.”

“You made it?”

Peter nodded, “I kinda broke into a high school and used some chemicals they had.” He paused a thought occurring to him. “I’m running low actually, I need more.”

“You broke into a high school to steal chemicals to make webs?” Tony repeated slowly.

A blush crawled it’s way onto Peter’s face. “It sounds better when you don’t say it like that.”

Tony couldn’t help but laugh a bit, “Alright, got it. Well next time maybe I can help you make some rather than breaking and entering.”

Peter’s eyes lit up, “Really?”

Tony couldn’t help but smile more at his enthusiasm, “Really.”

~~~~~

Tony woke up to the sound of someone shouting his name.

He opened his eyes and slowly remembered what was going on. He was sitting in a chair in Peter’s hospital room.

“*Mr. Stark!*”

Tony’s attention was brought to Peter, the boy was calling him while a woman in a beige pantsuit tapped her foot impatiently.

“Calling him won’t change anything,” she frowned at Peter who called for him again.

Tony stood up, “And who are you supposed to be?”

The woman gave him an uninterested look and rolled her eyes, “Tara Evans with Child Protective Services. I’m his social worker, and I’m here to discuss where Peter will be going after he is released.”

“Well why don't you leave, and come back the day he’s released?”

She crossed her arms, “While I do know you usually throw money and that uh- *charming* attitude of yours at problems, but that’s not going to work today. It would actually be appreciated if you leave so I may speak to Peter alone.”

Tony glanced at Peter who was staring at him worriedly. Tony turned back to the woman with a slight smile, “Ms. Evans was it? It is your job to do what’s best for the child correct?”

She gave an annoyed sigh, “Skip to the point.”

“Well clearly happiness is in his best interest, and to get to happiness you need to go.”

She didn’t bat an eye, “Goodbye Mr. Stark.”

Tony paused thinking, “What would it take for me to be allowed to be in the room?”

“You’d have to have some sort of stake in this process. You’d have to be his relative, or a potential foster parent or something.”

“Done,” Tony said without missing a beat. “I’ll foster him.”

“Mr. Stark?” Peter asked confused.

Emotion finally showed on Ms. Evans face, “What? That’s not how things work- you have to-”

“I’ll have my lawyers figure it out. That is, Peter you don’t mind right?”

Peter stared at him his mouth opening and closing a few times.

“Kid?”

“Y-yeah? I-I mean yes, sure, I-I’d like that...”

“Good,” Tony nodded. “Then it’s settled.”

Ms. Evans stared at him blankly, “*What?*”

~~~~~

“So let me get this straight... You agreed to foster Peter, went through *all* the paperwork, made a deal with social services so they come visit twice a week, and *now* two and half months later everything is official and he’s moving in tomorrow your having second thoughts?”

“You’re making me sound like a horrible person Lee.”

“You do that yourself.”

“I don’t know how to raise a kid! I was just thinking I wanted him to be happy! I didn’t think about the rest.”

Lee gave him a slight smile, “Then I think you’re already on the right track. And you’ve got the Avengers by your side, I’m sure you guys can figure it out. And if not, I’ll still be here to help out until the business officially fails.”

“I can-”

“I have never accepted handouts from you in the past, and I’m not doing it now. But regardless you want Peter to be happy and Peter *trusts* you, and I think that’s what’s most important.

~~~~~

“So, how’s it feel to be out of there?” Tony asked Peter after a few minutes of driving in silence.

“Good,” Peter nodded, “The uh other kids there and I didn’t get along to well.”

When he stopped at a light Tony looked at him to see Peter staring down at his bag nervously. Peter seemed to realize cuz he looked back to the road.

“Well uh, I’m sure you’ll get along with everybody. They’re all just giant kids anyway.” When Peter didn’t say anything in response he kept talking unsure what else to do. “And things will be good this way, by the time your settled you’ll still have about a week to chill before until school starts. Also meaning you are free to spend time at KJ’s, Lee has been asking about you.”

“I wanted to go, but they didn’t really let me leave much,” Peter shrugged looking out the passenger window. “It was hard to get out to be Spider-Man too.”

“Being Spider-Man safely though right?”

Peter gave a slight groan, “Yes Mr. Stark.”

“I’m just making sure,” Tony shrugged. “Just making sure.”

There was a pause before something seemed to come to Peter’s mind and he gave an excited smile, “Will I finally be able to go into your lab? And you’d help me with my web shooters?”

“Not today, but soon,” Tony agreed to which Peter deflated slightly.

“How soon?”

“Soon.”

“ *Fine .*”

“But there is something you can do today.”

“What?”

“Well after I give you the grand tour, you can finally meet the rest of the team.”

“Really?”

“Really.”

“Awesome.”

~~~~

“And now the last stop on our tour before meeting everyone,” Tony announced as the elevator came to a stop. “Floor 80.” He stepped out the elevator and Peter eagerly followed, “This where I live. And of course where you now live.”

“Whoa,” Peter marveled looking around at everything with interest.

“Would you like to see your room?”

“ *Please .*”

Tony led the way pointing out things as they went before he stopped in front of a door. He motioned for Peter to open it and the boy did stepping in.

Inside was a large bed, a couch, and a giant TV plastered to the wall. The door to the walk in closet was open, next to the door for the bathroom. He had expected Peter to rush forward and examine everything as he did with the other rooms and floors they had visited, but the boy remained frozen in the spot.

“Kid?” Tony asked him raising an eyebrow.

“I really get to *live* here?” Peter asked in a small voice.

“You don’t like it?” Tony asked stepping past him into the room and frowning at the room itself. “I can always have it redecorated for you.”

“No... It’s-its great.”

Tony turned around to see the boy’s eyes were gathering with tears which he tried and failed to wipe away. Tony stared at him for a moment unsure of what to do when Peter spoke again,

“I’m sorry...” he said through his gasps for breath. “I just- thank you Mr. Stark.”

Tony gave the kid a small smile and after an awkward pause he moved to pull the kid into a hug. It was an awkward hug, but Peter didn’t pull away.

“I’m sorry,” Peter said again. “It’s just- it’s been a while since I had somewhere to live... the group home was fine and all but my own room... and someplace as nice as here... I-I’m sorry.”

Tony felt a sudden pang of emotion, and he opened and closed his mouth how to respond for a moment. He held Peter tightly trying to process, he knew Peter had little to nothing and he had planned on giving Peter whatever he could, he hadn’t thought about how overwhelming it would be for him.

“You don’t need to apologize,” Tony told him finally. “Why don’t you sit down? I’ll grab you

some water.”

Peter nodded into his chest and moved to sit on the bed while Tony retreated to the kitchen. When he returned with the glass of water Peter had calmed slightly, but a few tears did continue to escape.

“Thank you,” he said taking the water and drinking it quickly.

“No problem kid.”

“Not just the water,” He said lowering the glass. “Thank you for everything Mr. Stark.”

Tony couldn’t help but smile a bit, “Tony... and you’re welcome.”

“What?”

“You’re living with me now right?”

“Yeah...”

“Then you can call me Tony.”

He nodded and fell silent for a moment, “Can we pause the tour so I don’t go meet everyone like this?”

Tony couldn’t help but laugh at his request, “Sure kid.” He smiled grabbing the remote and handing it to him. “Let’s find a movie in the meantime, and maybe we can set up your new phone. Sound good?”

Peter gave a sniffle as he wiped at his eyes again, but Tony could see the smile on his lips. "Sounds good."

Thanks so much everyone for the kudos and comments (I was not expecting this response)!

## Three

### Chapter Notes

Just so you know: Bruce never left

### Three

“Alright kid, it’s time to meet everyone. Ready?”

“Yeah, lets do it,” Peter nodded following Tony into the elevator.

When the elevator doors opened to the common room Tony could almost feel the nervous rolling off of Peter in waves. He gave Peter a reassuring smile as he led the way out of the elevator and over toward the group.

“There you guys are,” Rhodes called with a wave. “Chinese just got here.”

“Well put the food down for a sec,” Tony told them. He turned slightly to see Peter was hanging back so he hurriedly waved the boy forward. Peter shuffled forward quickly and uncertainly to Tony’s side. “Everyone this is Peter Parker.”

A chorus of hellos came, but Steve was the first to make his way over and greet Peter personally.

“Y-you’re Captain America,” Peter said slowly his eyes wide.

Steve gave the kid a smile and held out his hand for Peter to shake, “Call me Steve, nice to meet you Peter.”

“Nice to meet you,” Peter echoed shaking the man’s hand.

“Tony has told us about you, it’s nice to actually meet you in person.”

Tony watched as Peter looked up to him with confusion evident on his face, “You talk about me?”

Tony nodded, “Course why wouldn’t I?”

Peter didn’t say anything else, but he blushed slightly.

Steve standing up seemed to move everyone else into motion and one by one they came to introduce themselves, and Tony found himself slightly amused by Peter’s reactions to each.

To Sam, Clint, and Rhodes he seemed a bit shy but not uncomfortable. Peter seemed to marvel at Vision, the boy’s eyes glued to the stone in Vision’s Head. As Peter said hello to Wanda, Tony couldn’t help assume the two would get along perhaps because they were closer in age than the others.

“Nice to meet you, I’m Natasha Romanoff.”

Tony came out of his thoughts about Wanda and Peter as Natasha introduced herself. Peter shook her hand and stood almost rigidly as he did so. Tony resisted the urge to smile at her unintentionally intimidating the poor kid, when he smiled anyway he turned to the Chinese food, “Lets eat!”

It was about fifteen minutes later that Bruce walked in and Tony was able to see Peter’s best reaction.

“Hey everyone,” Bruce greeted.

“Bruce,” Tony called. “Like to introduce you to Peter.”

Bruce made his way over and extended a hand, “Nice to meet-”

“You’re Bruce Banner!” Peter said jumping up and shaking his hand enthusiastically. “You’re

amazing!”

Bruce looked taken aback, “Uh- thank you. I-”

He was quickly cut off as Peter kept rambling about “amazingly awesome” things Bruce had accomplished as he continued to shake the man’s hand. Tony left a laugh escape when Bruce looked over to him with a look which said that he was wondering if any of this was for real.

Tony gave a shrug in reply.

“How about we talk a bit more later?” Bruce suggested.

Peter stopped mid word and seemed to realize he had been rambling, a deep blush hit his face and released Bruce’s hand and instead began rambling apologies.

“It’s alright,” Bruce assured him. “Let me just get some food first, okay?”

Peter nodded and sat back down to eat his food as Tony took a bite of his food to resist the urge to laugh.

~~~~~

The evening had been going well for the most part, everyone talked to Peter and the boy didn’t seem overly shy.

Tony had risen from the couch to grab a drink, when Clint followed.

“He’s tired,” Clint stated.

“What?”

“The kid’s tired,” Clint said again.

Tony frowned and glanced over to where Peter was talking to Wanda, “How can you tell?”

“I can see it in his eyes.”

“They just look brown to me.”

Clint shrugged, “Maybe it’s because I have kids.” With his opinion stated Clint went back to the group, and after a pause Tony followed.

He sat back down and glancing to Peter. The boy seemed fine to him, but part of him wondered if Clint was right.

“Tony?”

“Hm?” Tony asked looked to see Rhodes getting his attention.

“Were you listening to anything I said?”

Tony glanced at Peter in time to see the boy give a large yawn. “Nope,” Tony said looking back to Rhodes. “Think I’m gonna head to bed.” He stood up ignoring the semi confused looks he got, he wasn’t usually one to turn in early.

“Oh Peter,” Tony said turning to him trying to make his words sound like an afterthought. “I should uh- I should show you where a few more things are before I do.”

“I guess I should just sleep too,” Peter shrugged standing. “It was nice meeting everyone.”

“So what do you think of all of them?” Tony asked when they were back in Peter’s room.

“They’re really cool,” Peter smiled opening his backpack and searching through it for clothes to sleep in. As he did Tony couldn’t help but take in the boy’s dingy and worn clothes.

“We can go shopping to get you some clothes tomorrow,” he decided.

Peter looked a bit embarrassed by his statement, “I’ll- I’ll be fine. You don’t have to go out of your way. You’re already letting me stay here.”

Tony paused in thought before he shrugged and turned to leave the room, “Guess I’ll just go with Bruce, and Cap. We were planning on going shopping tomorrow anyway.”

“You were?” Peter asked quickly. “Well then, I guess I might as well tag along.”

Tony smiled and turned around, “Great. Just shout if you need anything, F.R.I.D.A.Y. Will let me know.”

“Goodnight Mr- Goodnight Tony.”

“Night kid.”

~~~~~

“You do realize your in over your head right?” Rhodes commented when Tony headed back.

“I’m probably gonna drown,” Tony nodded. “But maybe I can keep the kid afloat.”

“We’ll help you out Stark,” Steve assured him. “Just tell us how.”

Tony paused, “Well... how about you and Bruce go shopping with Peter and I tomorrow. I’ll even throw in a free makeover.”

Bruce frowned, "You already told him we were going didn't you?"

"Great, we can leave around noon."

~~~~~

"I'm starting to feel insulted. You don't like anything I pick out for you."

"I don't want to dress like you Tony."

"At least try on the T-shirt. It's a cat dressed as you!"

"I'll pass."

"Fine, maybe Bruce or Peter will appreciate me."

"I doubt it."

"Where did those two go anyway?" Tony asked looking around.

Steve pointed without looking, "They went to look for pants."

"So in other words, Peter is most likely rambling to him?" Tony smiled taking the cat shirt for himself.

Steve chuckled, "Well I don't know Peter at all, but I think that's a pretty good guess."

"I don't even know that much about Peter," Tony shrugged.

“And you took him in anyway?” Bruce’s voice asked as he walked over. As Tony’s confused look he added, “He went to the changing room.”

Tony nodded slowly, “And yeah I took him in. The kid needs a place to stay.”

“How long had he been on the streets?”

“I don’t know.”

“How did he end up there?”

“I don’t really know the details, I can only make guesses.”

Bruce frowned, “So what do you know about him?”

“His name is Peter Parker, his fifteenth birthday is in about a week, and he’s a smart kid with a lot of potential. In other words, I know everything that matters about him.”

“What’s his favorite cake flavor?”

“That’s not important.”

“Well we’ll need to buy cake if his birthday is coming up,” Steve chimed in. “Or maybe you can do half chocolate and half vanilla.”

“Should I get a present before we leave the mall?” Bruce wondered aloud.

“I was going to give him a present,” Tony informed them. “I’m almost down with it. Just a couple more tests.”

Steve frowned, “Why am I worried?”

“Because you enjoy overreacting,” Tony answered easily.

Steve seemed ready to disagree, but instead he shook his head, “What are you getting him?”

“Well Peter- *has* finally returned!”

“You make it sound amazing, I just tried on pants,” Peter said.

“Well if you’re done let’s ring you up,” Tony told him leading the way back toward the front of the store.

“You don’t have to get me anything for my birthday,” Peter said suddenly.

Tony cursed (earning a disapproving look from Steve), he had forgot about the kid’s super hearing.

“I don’t have to do many things,” Tony told him with a carefree shrug. “So where should we go next? Maybe *Spencer’s* ? Cap, I would pay to see walk through that store.”

“I’ll be sure to avoid it,” Steve replied.

Tony crossed his arms and turned away from him as if he took offense, “I’m starting to think you hate shopping with me.”

Steve didn’t say anything, but Tony assumed he had made a face of some sort in response judging by the fact he heard Peter laugh. And in that moment he was surprised to learn how much he enjoyed the sound.

~~~~~

Tony nodded at the group gathered. “Good, you’re all present for roll call. Step one accomplished.”

“You still haven’t told us why we’re having a roll call,” Rhodes pointed out.

“Now that Peter has been here two days, Ms. Evans is coming in the next few hours,” Tony informed them. “She’s Peter’s social worker and she hates me. So you all need to be on your best behavior. So for one Vision no walking through walls.”

“Ah yes, I have been trying to improve on that,” Vision nodded.

“Bruce no science talk, if she hears anything about chemicals she’ll think it’s bad. Or she’ll start asking about the lab and safety.”

“Do I even have to be present?” Bruce asked.

“Yes, she’s gonna want to meet everyone who’s gonna be around Peter.”

“Wanda,” Tony continued looking to her. “No magic stuff. I don’t even wanna get into that with her.”

Wanda frowned, but didn’t comment.

“Nat, Clint no weapons, Sam no weapons *or* wings.”

Tony ignored their protesting and continued.

“Rhodey you should be fine. We’ve known each other forever tell her some good stories about me or something.”

Rhodes gave a smirk, “I don’t have many.”

“Find one. Finally Cap? You just be yourself.”

Steve nodded, "I can do that."

"Wait no- be yourself but don't say anything bad about me."

Steve chuckled, "We'll all behave Tony. Right now I think you could calm down though."

"I'm fine," Tony protested walking off. "I need to go make sure Peter is dressed." He stepped in the elevator when he remembered, "And remember to tell her, but *not* Peter about the birthday party!"

"God if he's this way and Peter's a teen imagine if the kid was baby," Tony hear Sam comment, he resisted the urge to reply as the doors began to close. But before they closed he was able to hear Natasha's response.

"I can't wait until Peter starts dating. Tony's going to be so high strung."

There was a pause before Tony frowned, "F.R.I.D.A.Y. add dating to the Peter list."

"Would you like it added to the 'Peter Safety List' or the 'General Peter Worries'?"

"The second one."

~~~~~

"Ms. Evans," Tony greeted when the woman walked through the Tower's front doors.

"Mr. Stark," she replied, eyes scanning the lobby.

"Shall we head upstairs?"

She nodded, “I’d like a tour of your living quarters, and then to speak with Peter.”

“Of course.”

Despite Tony’s nerves things seemed to be going well. Ms. Evans inspected the rooms, spoke to the whole team, spoke to him (during which he gave perfectly well structured answers regardless of what others said), and now she was currently talking to Peter alone.

“You should drink some water,” Rhodes suggested.

“I need coffee,” Tony disagreed.

“I cut you off an hour ago.”

“But it’s been an hour.”

Rhodes rolled his eyes.

“They’re *still* talking,” Tony frowned. “Still.”

“Well while Peter’s distracted, why don’t you tell us more about the birthday party you’re planning?” Natasha suggested. “You only told us it’s next week, so how old is he going to be again?”

Tony sighed, “Fifteen, and you can all come right?”

“I might be a bit late,” Rhodes told him.

“Who all is coming?” Sam asked. “Does he have friends?”

“Sort of. So, besides us,” Tony started. “Lee will be there, and considering it’s gonna be at KJ’s

some of the kids who are regulars there will come, then Happy and Pepper. Oh, and I invited Ms. Evans. I don't think she'll come, but I did."

"And the super secret birthday present?" Bruce asked.

"I'm still working on it. But I'll have it done on time. I don't plan on giving it to him until we get back anyway."

"But what-"

"Boss, Ms. Evans is on her way down and Peter is walking her out," F.R.I.D.A.Y. announced.

Tony frowned, "Is it a bad or a good thing that she didn't say bye to me?"

"She may just be in a rush," Clint offered.

Tony didn't reply and he watched the elevator door and ignored the conversations around him as he waited.

"How'd it go?" Tony asked once Peter stepped out of the elevator.

Peter shrugged nonchalantly, "Fine."

Tony tried not to show his annoyance or worry at the one word response, instead he tried, "Did she say anything I should know?"

"Uh, just that next time she wants to talk to you about school and paparazzi."

Tony released a breath he hadn't realized he had been holding, if Ms. Evans was planning on topics for their regularly scheduled meetings, then that meant things so far were going to plan. Today had been a success, meaning he could focus on the birthday party.

~~~~~

*“Surprise!”*

Peter jolted in shock and stared ahead at the people in KJ’s.

“Happy Birthday Peter,” Tony told him clapping the kid on the shoulder and pushing him ahead slightly.

“Uh- wow, thanks,” Peter replied shyly. “Thanks everyone.”

There was a pause in which everyone seemed to be waiting for Peter to do something, but he didn’t move.

“Well Peter, what do you want to play first?” Lee asked him.

Peter smiled up at her before he turned to Tony, “Hmmm, Mist- Tony what haven’t I beat your high score in yet?”

Tony couldn’t stop himself from laughing, “I’m not going to go easy on you, just because it’s your birthday.”

“You’ll still lose either way.”

“You can try.”

Peter smirked and led the way to Terminator Salvation, the first game the two of them had ever played together, and picked up one of the guns. Tony inserted his quarters then picked up the other and held it at the screen ready.

“Thank you,” Peter told him after they had been playing for a moment. “You didn’t have to do this for me. Thank you.”

“No problem, it was Lee’s idea anyway.”

“No it wasn’t.”

“What makes you so sure?” Tony asked glancing at him.

Peter’s eyes hadn’t left the game, “Lee wouldn’t suggest it, she’s suggest taking me for food or something. This is you, *very* you, so thank you.”

Tony gave a small smile, “Your welcome, and don’t use up all your thank yous. I haven’t even given you your present yet.”

“What is it?”

“You’ll see when we get home.”

“Fine... but what flavor is that cake?”

“Vanilla and chocolate- hey stop trying to shoot me!”

“Me?” Peter asked and Tony could hear the smile in his voice. “I would never.”

~~~~~

“Ready for this present? The most amazing present of all presents?” Tony asked setting down the box in front of Peter with a smile.

The kid looked ready to jump off the couch in excitement (though maybe it could be due to the amount of sugar he had eaten during the party earlier). He picked up the box and gave it a shake listening.

“Just open it,” Tony encouraged.

Peter tore into the wrapping paper and opened the box and his mouth dropped open as he picked up its contents.

“A *suit*?” Peter asked in disbelief his eyes sparkling. “Oh my God! This is amazing, thank you!”

Tony nodded in the direction of the bathroom, “Go try it on.”

Peter jumped up and took the suit with him as he ran from the room.

“I didn’t think you were making him a suit,” Natasha commented. “You seemed to be making a big deal about everything else he does after all.”

Tony shrugged nonchalantly, “I know he’s gonna go out to be Spider-Man regardless if I tell him not to. So if he’s wearing that, at least he has all of the safety protocols that I installed.”

“Wait the kid is Spider-Man?” Sam asked in surprise.

Rhodes frowned at him, “Yes, where have you been?”

Sam shrugged, “Not here apparently.”

“What kind of safety protocols?” Steve asked Tony.

“Parachutes, tracking device, there’s the Training Wheels Protocol,” Tony said ticking things off on his fingers. “There’s also-”

“Tony this is awesome!”

Tony turned to see Peter rush in wearing his suit and mask. "Looks good," Tony nodded.

"It's more than good!" Peter shouted before he did an excited backflip. "This is the most awesome thing ever!"

"Alright calm down before you hurt yourself," Tony laughed.

Peter didn't do another flip (thankfully) rather he pulled off his mask to reveal the giant smile plastered on his face.

"When can I go test it out?"

"Not tonight," Tony said quickly.

"Oh come on!"

"Nope, it's been a long day and you start school in a couple days."

Peter gave a groan, "When then?"

"Maybe the weekend after-"

Peter ran forward and grabbed Tony in a tight hug, "Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!"

Tony's arms were pinned to his sides but he smiled nonetheless, "I said maybe."

"Better than no," Peter replied not letting go. "Also thank you for the *best* birthday."

"Don't say that, that means I have to outdo myself next year."

Peter pulled back slightly and looked up to him with hopeful eyes, “Next year?” He repeated slowly.

Tony nodded, “Course, unless you already have plans for next year.”

Peter shook his head and then hugged Tony tightly again and Tony could see the smile on his face, “Thank you so much Tony.”

Tony smiled back, “Happy birthday kid.”

Four

Four

“Rise and shine Underoos,” Tony called loudly as the lights to Peter’s room came on.

Peter gave a groan in response and seemed to sink deeper into his bed.

“It’s the first day of school,” Tony announced. “Get in the shower and then grab some breakfast.”

“Can we just... just *not* ?” Peter yawned.

“Not an option.”

“Yeah you can go back to sleep and I’ll stay here,” he murmured pulling the blanket over his head.

“Considering I have a meeting right after I drop you off not happening. So come on, get up before I decide to have F.R.I.D.A.Y. blast songs you hate.”

Peter gave a few grumbled words of annoyance as he climbed out of his bed and made his way into the bathroom.

Satisfied Tony retreated into the kitchen and made himself a cup of coffee and read up on the topic of his meeting. When Peter finally emerged from his room dressed he sat down and frowned at the plate of eggs in front of him.

“Did you cook this?”

“God no,” Tony told him. “This tower wouldn’t be standing if I had to cook. Cap gets up early and I asked him to make you a plate. Now eat and lets go.”

~~~~~

“Happy will pick you up this afternoon,” Tony told Peter as they got close to the school.

Peter nodded mutely.

“You nervous or something?”

“I haven’t exactly gone to school in a while... and not this school. It’s just... I’m gonna be the weird new kid.”

“If Spider-Man can survive everything that’s been thrown at him, then you, Peter Parker, can survive high school.”

“We’re two different people,” Peter protested.

Tony shook his head mentally tabling that discussion, “You can do this, Peter,” he tried as they pulled up to the building. “Text me if you need anything.”

Peter nodded as he took a deep breath before he climbed out of the car.

~~~~~

“Something wrong?”

Tony looked up at Pepper in surprise, “No, why?”

She gave him an unimpressed look, “You spent the entire board meeting looking at your phone with a worried face.

He let out a sigh as he checked his phone again, “It’s Peter’s first day of school. He was really

nervous this morning, and Happy should have picked him up by now so I thought maybe one of them would text me.”

“You’ve been reduced to a worried father already,” she chuckled.

“I have not!”

“Either way next meeting starts in ten, why don’t we head in now and see if we can get out quickly?”

“Thanks Pepper.”

~~~~~

“Hey, how was school?” Tony asked when he stepped out of the elevator to find Peter watching TV with a textbook in his lap.

“I got a stupid amount of homework for it being the first day,” Peter replied looking up at him. “I just need to finish reading this, but it’s more than boring.”

“What is it?”

Peter’s eyebrows furrowed as he looked down at the page, “I barely know.”

Tony gave a chuckle, “But all in all school was good?”

“I guess.”

“And how are the people?”

“They’re people.”

Tony shook his head deciding not to push, “Anything in particular you want for dinner?” He asked instead.

“No.”

*As if I forgot I was living with a teenager*, Tony thought before he shook his head. “How about Italian?”

“That’s fine.”

“Well uh, I’m gonna see if anyone else wants anything before I try to order.”

When Peter didn’t reply Tony headed to the elevator.

“So how’s the kid’s first day go?” Natasha asked Tony when he got upstairs.

Tony shrugged, “Besides the fact that he got homework I assume it went okay, considering I can’t get proper answers out of him.”

“He’s a teenager,” she shrugged. “And it was his first day at a new place, I’m sure he’s just trying to figure it out himself first.”

~~~~~

Almost three weeks later and Tony still hadn’t gotten anything concrete about school out of Peter.

The two talked about everything else, Peter had even gotten to update his webshooters, they had negotiated when he was allowed to go out as Spider-Man (on weekends when he told Tony before he went, or on certain school nights after homework was done and he had permission) and when he wasn’t, they had talked about Ms. Evans, and they had gone and talked about KJ’s. But nothing about school.

Over that time all advice he had gotten was similar to that of what Natasha had initially told him, well except for Sam who had suggested he just tell Peter to give him answers which were longer than two words. Tony had done so, and Peter seemed to take it as a challenge and now all of his responses were three words long.

He had been sitting at his desk thinking about ways to talk to Peter, thus barely listening to the man talking to him, when F.R.I.D.A.Y. interrupted.

“Boss, Peter has left the school as Spider-Man.”

Tony’s eyes widened and he held up a hand to the man talking to him, “Just leave it here,” Tony told him. When the man left Tony took a deep breath, “Call him.”

“Uh hello?” Peter’s voice asked confused.

“We had a deal kid,” Tony started. “You ask me before you head out to be a Spiderling.”

He heard Peter curse, “I uh, I just wanted to blow off some steam after school- I’ll - I’ll still get my homework done. Can I just have an hour or two?”

“Blow off steam about what?”

“Stuff...”

“Peter?”

“Well uh...” There was a brief pause in which Tony was able to hear a shout from the other side. “I gotta go Tony! These guys are trying to mug a lady!”

“2 hours Peter!”

“Bye!” Peter shouted before the call disconnected.

“Should I call him back?” F.R.I.D.A.Y. asked.

Tony shook his head with a sigh, “Just tell Happy he no longer has to pick the kid up.”

~~~~~

Tony made it a point to finish work early and get home within two hours, he made it in one hour and thirty six minutes to be exact. And surprisingly enough Peter was already sitting at his desk doing his homework in his room.

“I’m sorry,” Peter told him looking up from history homework. “I was just upset over a Spanish test.”

“Why do I feel like you’re not telling me everything?” Tony frowned. “You know you can talk to me.”

“Boss, Steve Rogers is asking for you. He says it’s urgent,” F.R.I.D.A.Y. interrupted.

“Tell him to handle it himself,” Tony replied not taking his eyes off of Peter.

“Shouldn’t you go help?” Peter asked sounding almost hopeful that he could get out of this conversation, but Tony wasn’t going to allow that.

“You’re my priority not him.”

Peter gave a sigh and hung his head, “Well it’s uh... it’s been a few weeks since school started and well I still don’t have any friends. Like I’m trying, but I don’t know. They just don’t like me. So I got upset over that *and* my test and I decided to be Spider-Man because well people like Spider-Man a lot more.”

Tony clapped him on the shoulder before giving it a squeeze, “People like Spider-Man but they’ll learn to *love* Peter Parker. Just give it some more time, I’m sure it’s just a matter of time.”

Peter nodded, "I guess."

Tony gave him a smile and squeezed his shoulder again, "Well you know what? I have a good feeling about tomorrow. Things are gonna change and you'll get friends out it."

"You can't tell the future Tony."

"Or can I?"

Peter cracked a small smile, "Then can you tell me the answers to my history test tomorrow?"

Tony shook his head and stood, "Do your homework kid."

~~~~~

"A fight?" Tony repeated.

"Yes, a fight occurred between Mr. Parker and two other boys earlier. All are alright, but fighting is not tolerated and so we would like to talk to you and Peter about a suitable punishment."

"What exactly happened?"

"I am still piecing together details," The principal sighed. "But the other parents and guardians will be here in about a half hour, I trust you will be joining us?"

Tony was the last to arrive.

He stepped through the door into the Principal's Office to find Peter and two boys sitting in chairs. The two boys had parents behind them, but Tony was more focused on the bruise on Peter's face. At his gaze Peter didn't say anything but he did readjust the ice pack he was holding.

“Perfect timing Mr. Stark,” the Principal -Griffin according to his name placard on the desk-greeted. “I have already talked to each of the boys individually and was about to involve the parents. So anything you boys would like to say before we begin?”

“It’s Parker’s fault,” one of the two boys said quickly.

“He attacked us first,” the other added. “Then-”

Tony frowned at the both of them before he spoke, “And yet neither of you have a mark on you.”

“Just because you can’t see them doesn’t mean they’re not there!”

“Are you calling my son a liar?” One of the mother’s challenged.

This was going to take a while.

In the end the two boys gave in after they apparently had told different stories about the event. Though the long and short of it was they had attacked Peter.

“You didn’t fight back,” Tony stated when the two of them had climbed in the car.

“What makes you say that?” Peter asked looking out the passenger window, the first words he had spoke since Tony arrived at the school.

“Because I know you’re strong Peter. Your stronger than the normal person. If you fought back it would show.”

Peter was silent for a moment, “I didn’t wanna accidentally hurt them for real.”

Tony gave a small smile, “You’re a true hero kid.”

“A hero who got detention.”

“Well if it’s any consolation I’m sure Cap will be proud of you.”

“Really?”

“Really... but Peter there is something I have to ask, what started this fight?”

Peter frowned, “I... I don’t get along with them. They don’t like me, because- because of you.”

Tony froze taken aback by Peter’s words, he didn’t even realize the light he had stopped at had turned green until honking broke him out of his reverie.

“Everyone sees you drop me off in the morning,” Peter continued. “They said I must think I’m special to be Tony Stark’s kid. And they found out I used to live on the streets, so that’s just fuel to the fire... To them it’s fun to pick on me and... yeah...”

“You said you didn’t have friends, you didn’t say you were being bullied,” Tony frowned. “And this is something you could’ve told me- I could’ve-”

“You doing anything is exactly what they wanted!” Peter protested. “They think I can’t stand up for myself because I have Ironman. That my grades don’t matter because I have Ironman. This past month has been hell, but I never said anything because despite all of it I enjoy our rides to school! And... and I didn’t want them to stop because of them.”

Tony heard Peter give a sniffle and he reached over to give the boy’s shoulder a squeeze. “I’ll talk to your principal tomorrow,” he decided. “I’ll drive you to school, walk you in, and go talk to him. Show all of them that they didn’t get to you or us. And I probably shouldn’t be saying this, but I’ve never been considered a good role model before so why start now? If the time comes where they try to hurt you again, *fight back* . Show them that you can handle yourself.”

Peter gave another sniffle, “You’re a terrible role model.”

Tony smiled, “I’m aware... And since I’m already terrible, how about some ice cream before dinner?”

“You’re the perfect amount of terrible, Tony.”

“Please tell that to everyone else in my life...”

Five

Five

“Mr. Stark,” Principal Griffin nodded as Tony came in with an outstretched hand.

Tony shook it and sat down across from in a chair. The Principal sat as well and now that he was in the office alone with the man Tony took in the decor. The office seemed stereotypical for the most part, aside from the strange array bobbleheads on the edge. Tony’s eyes were drawn to the Hulk one specifically, he reached forward and picked it up and tapped its head.

The Principal cleared his throat, “I assume you’d like to speak about the events of yesterday?”

“Yeah, the ki- Peter,” Tony corrected putting the bobblehead back, “told me that those boys along with other kids here have been bullying him... *partially* due to his connection to me.”

The man nodded slowly, “I am not aware of any specific instances, but I did have my suspicions when I spoke to Peter yesterday afternoon.”

Tony frowned and tapped his fingers on he knee for a moment or so before he leaned forward in his seat, “And that’s *all* you have to say about it?”

“Without a specific incident my hands I'm afraid are tied Mr. Stark, Mr. Parker didn’t tell me those two were bullying him. From what he described there was a disagreement which got out of hand.”

“But-”

“Quite honestly I don’t think this is the right school for Mr. Parker.”

Tony tensed, “What do you mean by that?”

“Despite having only being a month into the school year he is making quite an impression on his

teachers with his grades. He also seems to have an affinity for math and science, to the point I think Midtown might be a more appropriate for him.”

Tony paused trying to think if he should know what “Midtown” was but the Principal must have seen his look because he said,

“It’s an advanced math and science school. I have had a few students transfer there over the years, and I think Mr. Parker might be the newest student over there... If you like I can contact those over there and see if they’re willing to consider him while you think it over.”

Tony nodded, “Please.”

~~~~~

“Isn’t him getting into that school a good thing?” Lee asked confused.

“Well I’m not sure if Peter will want to transfer,” Tony sighed. “He is already having a hard time where he is, so I haven’t told him yet. I also don’t want to get his hopes up if it’s not possible.”

The woman hummed in thought as she continued to clean the game off, “Well he’s smart so I’m just gonna say he gets in there. And when he does maybe he can go visit there before he actually transfers? You could pull some strings to do that right? Then Peter can see if he likes it first.”

Tony blinked in surprise, “You're smart Lee.”

She rolled her eyes, “Glad you finally noticed.”

“Boss, Ms. Evans will be arriving soon,” F.R.I.D.A.Y. told him.

Tony sighed and turned to leave, “I gotta go then, I should talk to her about all of this before Peter gets home from detention.”

“Good luck!”

~~~~

“Wait. So you’re telling me Mr. Parker got into a fight, got detention, and his principal *suggested* he transfer schools.”

“He wasn’t expelled,” Tony assured her.

“He’s being asked to leave school,” Ms. Evans protested.

“You didn’t let me finish, he is allowed to stay at his school *or* he can take an entrance exam for Midtown Science and Technology. It’s a more advanced school, and I and his principal believe the kid can get in.”

Ms. Evans frowned and tapped the pen she held against her leg quickly as she thought. “I’ll be sure to ask Peter his thoughts on-”

“I haven’t spoken to him about this yet,” Tony interrupted. “I was going to get Peter’s thoughts on it when he got home... But now I’m thinking I should wait until the principal is more sure about his chances.”

“I suppose that’s fair, but I will be sure to ask him about his school life as a whole.”

“He’s not exactly talkative in the subject,” Tony mumbled.

“And what is his punishment?” The woman inquired.

Tony blinked, “Hm?”

“I do assume he has a punishment at home in *addition* to the detention he has at school?”

“Right,” Tony said quickly. “Of course he has one.”

“Does he?” She asked one eyebrow raised to show she was unimpressed. “Does the man who never experienced discipline at that age give it?”

“I do as a matter of fact, Peter is not allowed to go out for the rest of the week. And he was very upset when I told him so.”

She didn’t look convinced and was about to speak when Peter stepped out of the elevator.

“Hi Ms. Evans, hey Tony,” Peter greeted with a small wave.

“Hello Peter,” Ms. Evans smiled. “I was just talking with Mr. Stark about your punishment for fighting at school. Do you think it was fair?”

Tony stared at Peter with a worried smile hoping to get the boy’s attention but Peter didn’t look away from her.

“Why would I ever think it’s fair?” Peter huffed without missing a beat. “It’s not like I do much anyway. Now I get punished at school *and* here, and I didn’t even start the fight!” Peter crossed his arms and began to walk away toward his room, “I’m going to put my backpack away.”

“I told you he wasn’t happy,” Tony sighed looking back to the social worker.

Ms. Evans only nodded slowly in response.

~~~~~

“Thanks for covering for me earlier,” Tony told Peter over dinner.

“No problem,” Peter shrugged taking a bite before he frowned, “I don’t have a punishment do I?”

“If anyone asks you weren’t allowed to go this week.”

“I don’t go out at all.”

“I don’t suggest you tell anyone else that.”

They are for a few minutes of silence before Tony sighed, “So I talked with your principal as promised...”

Peter’s eyes didn’t leave his food, “And?”

“And he said your teachers love you, and you’re really smart so if you wanted you could make it in an advanced school.”

Peter looked up with wide disbelieving eyes, “Advanced school?”

“Midtown Science and Tech, he said he’d talk to someone there about you. But only if you want, and then they could start the process.”

“I’m-I’m not that amazing!” Peter protested, his cheeks reddening.

“Don’t sell yourself short Pete.”

“But I’m not-”

“Did you or did you not design your own webshooters.”

“I did...”

“And you’ve been helping me out in the lab. I’m sure you’re more than overqualified for this school. The question is are you willing?”

“I... I don’t know...”

Tony nodded, “Well you don’t need to decide at this very moment but think it over, alright?”

“Alright.”

~~~~~

Unsurprisingly just as Peter had before when it came to school, he avoided the conversation at all costs.

He avoided the conversation even as he studied and took the entrance exams in fact, but since he had gone through with it Tony assumed he wanted to go.

“What if things are worse?” Peter asked abruptly. “I can’t do it.”

Tony raised an eyebrow, “I know you’re a bad liar, but is playing poker with us really that bad?”

“I’m not a bad liar, and I’m talking about school.”

“That was a lie right there,” Rhodes contributed. “I fold.”

“About transferring?” Tony asked tossing his cards in. “I fold too.”

Peter nodded quickly as he folded, “Things are bad here yes, but what if I get to Midtown and things are worse ‘cause I’m the new kid?”

“Then you tell them you live with the Avengers,” Sam chuckled taking the pot for himself.

“No,” Natasha interjected gathering the cards. “You just need to be yourself Peter. You’ll make friends there I’m sure of it.”

“I didn’t even make friends *here*,” Peter frowned.

“Because you have the mindset that you won’t,” Steve contributed. “You’re a good kid Peter. And you’ve managed to make friends with some of the strangest people alive. So-”

“But you guys are nice to me not because I’m me,” Peter protested. “You have to be nice because I live with Tony and you guys like him...”

“Ignoring them, you and I became friends,” Tony tried pausing to look at Peter seriously. “So did Lee, that’s two friends right there you got by being yourself. You *will* make more. Yes I introduced you to the team, but knowing them if I wasn’t around they would still like you because you’re a good kid. You can make friends Peter, but you need to give yourself a chance too.”

Peter didn’t look convinced as he looked down and poked his three remaining chips, “I’m losing... Can I go out as Spider-Man?”

Tony sighed but he nodded either way, “Be back by eleven thirty.”

When Peter left Natasha was the first to speak, “I think going to the new school will be good for him. Maybe he’ll gain some confidence.”

“He acts like a totally different person as Spider-Man,” Sam observed. “He’s more cocky.”

“He told me once that he sees Spider-Man as a different person,” Tony explained. “He is still trying to realize that he’s the same person either way... And I’m struggling to help.”

“It’s something he needs to learn for himself just give him time,” Rhodes told Tony. “Didn’t you have to learn something similar?”

Tony chuckled, “Yeah, I guess so. Thanks you guys... Also Nat I know your cheating.”

Natasha raised an eyebrow, “Can you prove it?”

~~~~~

“Boss, a sudden spike in the heat sensors was detected in Peter’s suit,” F.R.I.D.A.Y. announced interrupting the continuing poker gamer.

Tony was on his feet and calling his suit in an instant.

“Call him now.”

“Already dialing...”

Tony’s suit came to him and attached his body as he hurried out to the balcony. His helmet snapped shut as F.R.I.D.A.Y. gave her newest update,

“No response, but I am detecting a sudden spike in blood pressure.”

“Shit,” was all Tony replied as he shot off into the sky.

Tony’s heart rate was dangerously high. He could hear as his heart banged loudly in his chest to the point it was almost painful. “He’s okay, he’s okay,” Tony mumbled to himself as he closed in on the location. A burning building- no rather the building on the next street over from the burning building.

Tony hurriedly set himself down the moment he saw Peter laying on it.

The teen’s mask was off and he appeared to be breathing heavily, other than that he looked alright but that meant nothing.

“Tony?” Peter asked in surprise as he sat up with a cough. “What are you doing here?”

Tony ignored the question as he moved to Peter’s side and F.R.I.D.A.Y. began scanning him for

injuries, “Are you alright?”

Peter nodded, “Little winded but fine. What are you doing here? And how did you find me?”

“The sensors in your suit went off, so I followed the tracking device.”

“You put a tracking device in my suit?”

“I put everything in your suit. But are you really okay?”

Peter nodded and put on his mask as he stood, “I’m fine. The building caught on fire and I had the *pleasure* of helping some of the kids from my school out of it. Had to hold up part of the burning building at one point.”

Tony nodded and he let out a breath as he relaxed.

“You didn’t need to come all the way here,” Peter told him.

“I had to make sure you’re okay. You’re my responsibility Peter.”

Peter shrugged and moved to the edge of the roof to watch as the firefighters doused the last of the flames. “They were having a party in this house being renovated and somehow they ended up with something on fire and trying to put it out with vodka,” Peter said shaking his head. “Makes me glad I’m transferring.”

Tony took a deep breath trying not to let Peter’s nonchalant attitude to the situation cause him anger. “So now you want to transfer?” He asked instead.

“I need to get away from these people,” Peter nodded.

“You really scared me kid,” Tony told him after a pause.

Peter looked over to him, and despite his mask Tony could tell he was confused by the statement.

“I don’t want you getting hurt.”

Peter gave a sigh, “Sorry, didn’t mean to make you worry.”

Tony nodded satisfied, “You ready to go home then?”

“Can we go to KJ’s instead?”

Tony chuckled, “We could but I’m pretty sure she’d have a heart attack if she saw you wearing that. So let’s stop home first.”

Peter glanced down at himself, “Probably for the best... But I am totally beating you in any game after.”

“You’re on.”

## Six

### Six

“You’re up already?”

Peter nodded without turning around from the dresser he was looking in, “This is day one take two.”

“You’re that nervous?”

“No...”

Tony chuckled, “Well since you’re up early, maybe if you get yourself together fast enough we can grab breakfast at that bakery around the corner.”

“I will definitely be ready in time!”

“That means no singing in the shower.”

Peter’s face flushed, “Don’t you need to make coffee or something?”

~~~~~

“So Peter you have two options,” Tony stated when they pulled up to the train station across from Midtown Science and Technology.

Peter looked away from the school building confused, “What are they?”

“Number one I can drive you up to the door. Number two you get out here and walk.”

“Why would I-”

“You told me before that everyone seeing you drive up with me sent the wrong message. So what kind of message are you sending here, that you’re normal? Or that you’ve got this *wonderful* billionaire by your side? And I won’t be hurt by either option.”

Peter frowned in thought before he grabbed his backpack, “Can we call normal Plan A?”

Tony nodded, “Sure kid, I’ll have Happy pick you up from here too alright?”

Peter nodded stiffly as he climbed out of the car, “Alright.”

~~~~

“Well how was it?” Tony asked when he got back from work to find Peter eating from the pizza box in front of him.

“It was pretty good,” Peter nodded. “I think I made a friend?”

“Why did that sound like a question?” Tony asked sitting across from him and taking a slice for himself.

“Well I mean, I just met him but he seems cool. We exchanged numbers and we share classes. Oh his name is Ned.”

“Sounds to me like you have a friend, so what else seems cool about the school?”

“Hmm, I don’t know yet. The place itself is really cool. And Ned mentioned there’s a decathlon team that he’s on which sounds cool, but I don’t know I just got there.”

“Well you’ve got time. Once you get used to everything you can decide officially on clubs and

things, just be open minded for now.”

Peter nodded as he chewed, “That’s good advice.”

Tony frowned, “Why do you sound so surprised?”

~~~~

“Hey Tony.”

“Hey kid, something wrong?”

“No, no things are fine. I just called because I have a question.”

“Shoot.”

“Well Ned got this cool LEGO Death Star and he said I could help him with it, so I was wondering since it’s a Friday if I could go over his place after school and help him with it.”

“I’ve never met Ned or his parents...”

“It’ll be fine! He’s really nice and I haven’t met his parents, but I’m sure they’re chill!”

“You’ve only known him for a few weeks.”

“So? You let me go out all the time!”

“That’s different.”

“How?”

“It just is.”

“ *Please* ?”

“How about a compromise?”

“What kind of compromise?”

“What if he came over to the Tower instead?”

“W-what? Really?”

“I’m home tonight anyway, but I can go to my lab to be out of your hair, but that way you’re not over some random people’s house?”

“Alright!” He could hear muffled voices before Peter spoke again. “Sounds good. Can you tell Happy, cause I’m sure he wouldn’t believe me.”

Tony chuckled, “That means he’s doing his job right.”

~~~~

“This place is amazing!” A voice Tony didn’t recognize shouted. “I still can’t believe you live here!”

He heard Peter laugh in reply, “I hardly believe it. Now come on, Tony will want to meet you.”

“I’m friends with Tony Stark’s son.”

“He’s my foster parent.”

“The word parent makes you a son.”

“I think it’s a bit more complicated than that,” Tony told him walking out from his bedroom.

Ned looked normal enough, he was heavy set with honey skin, short dark hair and an amazed look on his face. He held out his hand, “Nice to meet you sir, I’m Ned Leeds.”

Tony shook it, “Nice to meet you.”

“I’m shaking your hand...” Ned marveled.

Tony nodded and released his hand before turning to Peter, “I’ll be with the team if you need anything.”

“We’ll be fine,” Peter promised.

“And Wanda is cooking tonight so Ned might need to head home when dinner starts.”

Peter deflated slightly, “Fine.”

With that out of the way Tony gave both the boys a wave and headed toward the elevator.

“You’re not staying to spy on them?” Nastasha teased when Tony sat down beside her on the couch.

“Of course not,” Tony responded moving to the couch. “They are just gonna use legos and hang out... Also that’s what F.R.I.D.A.Y. is for.”

“I’m still surprised you just let someone you don’t know walk into your super secure tower and hang out with Peter,” Bruce put in from where he sat in the armchair.

“Once again that’s what F.R.I.D.A.Y. is for. Also I rather have them here rather than Peter off being who knows where.”

“You do know he can handle himself right? He used to be on the streets.”

Natasha nodded, “And he has superpowers.”

“He’s still a kid,” Tony protested. “And-”

“Boss,” F.R.I.D.A.Y. interrupted. “Captain Rogers has called for everyone. It seems something is happening with Lady Liberty.”

“Precious monument?” Bruce frowned, “I’ll stay here.”

As others began to appear and rush around Tony hurried to the elevator headed to his and Peter’s apartment.

Peter was at the elevator when it opened, “Can I?”

“No,” Tony answered immediately, his eyes flickering past Peter to Ned who sat on the floor surrounded by LEGOs. Tony lowered his voice, “You’re not ready for this yet. Plus you’ve got a friend over. I’ll be back later.”

“But Tony-”

“Nope, if we aren’t back at a decent time order some food.”

Peter crossed his arms as he frowned.

Tony wasn't fazed, "As adorable as you are pouting won't work."

"*Fine*- I am not adorable! "

"Sure."

~~~~~

When Tony returned hours later he had mentally prepared himself to kick Ned out as it was getting late and the kid needed to get home, though surprisingly the boy was gone.

According to Peter once they finished the Death Star Ned had taken a cab headed home (Tony made a mental note to pay the boy's family back).

"You did tell him to keep everything quiet right?"

"Course," Peter nodded. "And despite his enthusiasm I think he will."

"Good. Well... maybe next week you can bring him to KJ's?"

Peter's eyes lit up and a smile stretched across his face, "That's an awesome idea! Lee would love him! Speaking of which can we go tomorrow?"

Tony blinked surprised, "Sure kid, tomorrow afternoon?"

He nodded in response, "Tomorrow afternoon."

~~~~~

"You didn't win."

“What do you mean I didn’t win?”

“We *tied* .”

“No I think you’re pronouncing win wrong, what are they teaching you at that fancy school?”

Peter rolled his eyes, “What should we do now?”

“Well, I still need to finish some stuff in the lab, wanna come with and you can help me or work on your web shooters?”

“Sounds good.”

“Do you have to do that on the ceiling?” Tony asked glancing up to Peter who stood on the ceiling a few hours later.

“I don't have to,” Peter shrugged.

“Is there anything you can’t stick to?”

Peter paused in thought, “I’ve never really tried sticking to a person cause I don't wanna hurt anyone. And of course not water... Wait! Do you think Bruce would let me stick to him as the Hulk? I could hang from his arm easily!”

Tony chuckled, “That’s a hard maybe.”

“Will you ask him for me? He always gets confused when I ask him things.”

“He’s not used to having fans, not everyone is as amazing as me... Come look at this for a second.”

Peter rolled his eyes as he lowered himself down from the ceiling and moved next to Tony,  
“What?”

Tony motioned to the designs before him, “I’m making upgrades to the Tower, as you can see this is our floor here. Is there anything you think I should add to it?”

“You make it sound like its not already amazing,” Peter smiled.

“So you don’t want me to add anything then?”

“Can we have a hot tub in the living room?”

“As much as I want to say yes, I know everyone who isn't us will give us shit about it.”

“So that's a no then?”

“It's a no.”

“Hmmm... what about an arcade?”

Tony nodded and was about to make edits when he paused, “If we make an arcade then...”

“Then we wouldn’t go to KJ’s,” Peter frowned. “Scratch that, make us a home theater.”

“Now *that's* a good idea.”

“No problem,” Peter smiled moving to sit down at his spot before he frowned. “I sound like you.”

“How so?”

“You say no problem a lot.”

Tony shrugged, “Is that a bad thing?”

Peter shook his head as he continued examining his web shooter. “No, just something I noticed.”

“If we make a home theater I’ll add enough seats for the team,” Tony thought aloud. “It would also work if you have friends over.”

“We need a popcorn and snack stand.”

“Snack bar slash regular bar,” Tony agreed. “We can have a movie and video game closet. Anything else?”

“I think that’s all,” Peter smiled before he gave a slight laugh, “Things have really changed a lot for me haven’t they?” he asked softly.

Tony’s eyes flickered to Peter, but he stayed silent letting the boy sink into his own thoughts. He watched as Peter smiled to himself, “I doubt this what May ever expected for me...”

“May?” Tony couldn’t help but repeat to which Peter froze for a moment before he gave a low curse in response, he hadn’t intended to speak. “You don’t have to tell me,” Tony said in Peter’s silence.

“She- she was my aunt,” Peter started slowly not taking his eyes off what he was doing, but it was clear he wasn’t really looking at it. “She and my uncle took me in when my parents died, then uncle Ben died... So it was just me and May, until...”

“Something happened?” Tony prompted to which Peter nodded.

“Yeah, and then I was put in the system. They bounced around between places none of them good nor bad. And one family seemed pretty okay, I liked them a lot, but then I was bit by the spider. And when my powers started... they called me a freak... And they told me I had no place near them.” Peter gave a sniffle and Tony wanted to say something but he couldn’t find the words, and

something in him told him that hugging Peter wasn't the best idea, so he only sat listening incase the boy wanted to say more.

"They all turned on me that quickly." Peter continued. "So I ran, and I never went back, and eventually I met Lee and then you..." Peter finally looked up to Tony with a smile as he wiped at his eyes. "So I guess it all worked out okay."

"I won't turn on you," Tony promised. "This place is just as much your home as it is mine."

Peter looked back to his web shooter still smiling, "Thanks."

"No prob-" Tony cut himself off and then took a breath. "You're welcome, Peter."

# Seven

## Chapter Notes

I apologize in advance for the awkwardness of this chapter

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

## Seven

The hospital's usual sounds and background noise had fallen to the wayside. For now all Tony could hear was Peter's uneven breathing. He stared down at the cold cup of coffee in his hands, Pepper had given it to him hours ago and he still hadn't taken a sip.

"Tony?"

He heard his name called a few more times before a hand touched his shoulder. Tony gave a sigh before he gave in and looked up at Bruce's face. The rest of the team had run off to stop something or other from happening, he really hadn't been listening, but Tony doubted whatever could be worse than Peter's condition. Bruce had stayed behind, but Tony wasn't sure if his reasoning had been he wanted to give Tony company or if he didn't think this was a job for him.

"Tony?" Bruce said again. "Ms. Evans is here."

Tony looked to the doorway and frowned at the woman's face, "Hi."

"Hi." She nodded taking a seat in an open chair. "Ms. Potts and Mr. Banner already told me what happened, but I'd like to hear it in your words."

Tony gave a sigh, "Alright..."

~~~~~

"Can I be like- like your guy in a chair?"

“Guy in a chair?”

“Yeah! Like if you don’t know something then you call me and I can do all the fancy computer stuff and help you out!”

“I don’t want to get you involved Ned. Plus I don’t think Tony would like it.”

“Does his opinion matter?”

“I do live with him.”

“Fine... but if you ever need a guy in a chair then call me.”

“Of course.”

“What would you need a guy in a chair for?” Tony couldn’t help but ask as he walked in Peter’s room.

Peter looked away immediately but Ned spoke up, “For Spider-Man!”

A million thoughts bubbles in Tony’s mind at once and he found himself unable to pick one.

“Did you need something Tony?” Peter asked.

Tony swallowed and nodded slowly, “Well it’s getting late and Happy is downstairs to drive Ned home.”

“Oh is it that time already?” Ned asked surprised as he stuffed a few things in his backpack. “I’ll see you Monday Peter!”

“You’re mad,” Peter stated when Ned left.

Tony scoffed as he crossed his arms, “That’s one way of putting it... Why does he know?”

“Because I told him,” Peter shrugged standing and exiting his room.

“You *what*?” Tony asked following him. “You do know the point of a secret identity right?”

“It’s just Ned!” Peter insisted walking away, but Tony wasn’t letting him get away this easy.

“And who will Ned tell?” Tony asked following him into the kitchen. “Will he tell his family? The rest of your school? The world?”

“He won’t.”

“How do you know?”

“What’s the big deal?” Peter asked turning to face him.

“The big deal is if he knows, there’s a chance people who want to hurt you could know!”

“Fine,” Peter said turning and wrenching open the fridge. “I won’t tell anyone else, if it’s *such* a problem.”

“You shouldn’t have even told him.”

“Well it’s too late and he’s my best friend!”

“Friends can turn on you.”

Peter abruptly slammed the fridge shut and it rattled at his extra force. "What is your problem?" He shouted turning back to Tony.

"That you're telling people-"

"You told the *whole world* who you are!" Peter shot back. "You told them your address and everything! And I can't tell a single person who I trust? What kind of hypocrisy is that?" He yelled making his way toward the elevator.

"Oh real mature!" Tony yelled after him as Peter stepped into the elevator and crossed his arms.

"I'm fifteen!" Peter yelled back as the doors closed.

"F.R.I.D.A.Y. stop the elevator!"

"I think the boy might need some space," The AI replied. "Though maybe it would simply be best if you went after him."

Tony didn't reply to the AI as the elevator door opened to reveal another elevator.

When he made downstairs he was still fuming but he found Peter easily enough.

"Peter!" He shouted.

He saw the boy tense and he could picture him rolling his eyes as he turned around to face him. "Leave me alone Tony!" He yelled back moving to cross the street.

"I just don't want you getting hurt!" Tony yelled jogging to catch up.

"I can take care of myself!" Peter yelled back, but thankfully he didn't try to run further away.

“Peter listen to me,” Tony insisted. “I’m sorry but I’m worried about you. And you’re right I’m being hypocritical but that’s because I regret telling the world everything! I had my house blown up because of it!”

“I’m not as stupid as you! Just because you make terrible decisions doesn’t mean I will!” Peter called crossing the street.

Tony hurried forward and grabbed Peter’s arm, “I just want-”

The next thing Tony knew was that he was being flung backwards. It took a moment for his mind to register that he had flown back from the street onto the sidewalk. The pavement was hard as he sat up attempting to process before he looked back to the street, back to where a crowd of people had already started converging. Tony hurried up his heart beating quickly as he unfortunately had a good idea who was in the center.

“We fought he went outside... I tried to stop him from running off and he- he was hit by a car,” Tony told Mrs. Evans. “He shoved me out of the way, and got hit himself... and now he’s here with broken ribs that caused internal bleeding and-” Tony’s voice caught. “And it’s all my fault... and now- now you’re going to take him away aren’t you?”

Ms. Evans was silent for a moment, “I shouldn’t need to. I simply need to talk to Peter before any decisions are made.”

“So that’s a maybe then?”

She gave a sigh, “I don’t like you personally Mr. Stark, but I’m not the one who has to deal with you daily. So as a parental figure for Peter you’ve gone above and beyond and been exceptional, and that I respect. That’s the reason we changed my visits to once a week rather than twice. So while I technically shouldn’t say anything, I will tell you that if the truth turns out to be what you told me, you will continue to foster Mr. Parker. But at the same time if my superiors decide otherwise...” she trailed off her words left unsaid.

Tony nodded slowly, “Thank you.”

~~~~~

“You’re okay.”

Tony had to fight back tears at the statement, “Worry about yourself kid,” he replied.

Peter gave a tired smile, “I’m just glad you’re okay... and- and I’m sorry.”

“No I’m sorry,” Tony said shaking his head. “I overreacted. I shouldn’t have...” He trailed off as a few tears escaped his eyes.

“Tony?”

Tony shook his head and moved to give Peter an awkward hug, “I’m just glad you’re alright Peter.”

Peter moved to hug him back.

~~~~~

Tony was more than grateful for Peter’s super healing. Peter was ready to leave the hospital after only a few days, and by then he was almost healed.

Doctors were more than confused of course, especially because the last time he had been brought to his hospital he had been here longer with less severe injuries.

Tony assumed it had something to do with the conditions Peter lived in affecting his healing factor and he made mental notes about it, but left the doctors to their mystery.

“Ms. Evans,” Peter smiled as the woman walked in the room. “What are you doing here?”

The woman gave a nervous smile which didn’t really suit her, “How are you feeling Peter?”

“Great! Tony is gonna take me to lunch and then we’re gonna go home cause he said I need to rest more.”

“Because you do,” Tony contributed. “So what can we do for you Ms. Evans?”

“Well...” she started uncertainly. “I came here because I had news about Peter’s *situation* .”

“I thought that was handled already?” Tony asked, his tone cold. “They already came and interviewed the both of us at length and they said everything was fine.”

“It is,” Ms. Evans assured him. “I’m here for a different reason- a different situation.”

“What is it then?”

“Well as you know you are Peter’s foster parent, in other words this arrangement was... *temporary* .”

Tony felt his heart drop to his stomach. He stared at her for a moment as he felt his hands curling into involuntary fists. He could feel Peter’s eyes on him waiting for him to speak, so Tony forced himself to ask the question he didn’t want an answer to, “What are you saying?”

She gave a small sigh, “I’m afraid the agency has found Peter a permanent home.”

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for this chapter’s awkwardness! There’s only...

ONE CHAPTER LEFT.

But BEFORE that I will post a chapter of the other drabble like things I wrote during this which didn’t make its way into the story.

Extra/Randomness

Chapter Summary

Hey everyone! Thanks so much for reading this story! Final chapter will be up in a few days, but in the meantime here are seven random pieces I wrote that were never put in the story for a variety of reasons. Enjoy!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Extra/Randomness

#1 Thor and Loki

“Ah Stark,” Thor smiled clapping Tony on the back. “congratulations on fatherhood.”

Tony frowned, “I’m not his dad Thor.”

“You’re not?”

“No, I’m his temporary guardian.”

Thor nodded, “Good. A child with you as the father may not turn out quite right.”

”Hey! I could adopt Peter and then I’d be a great dad!”

“Last time someone I knew adopted a child that child became Loki.”

“I think that’s an insult to all adopted children ever.”

~~Later~~

“What book is that?” Peter asked sitting down.

“One you have never heard of.”

“Oh... Well what is it about?”

Loki closed his book and looked up with an annoyed smile, “Is there something you’d like Mr. Parker?”

“Well not really- I was just- just wanting to talk to you.”

“And why ever would you want that? Hasn’t Stark trained you better?”

“Well uh, I know they all seem to hate you but I don’t really know why. And no one is telling me anything, so I thought I’d talk to you.”

Loki paused, “You have heard about the day aliens invaded New York I trust?”

“Well yeah, everyone has.”

Loki gave him a wicked smile as he leaned in closer, “I’m the one who caused that.”

“Oh.”

Peter fell silent, but he didn’t move or leave. After a moment or so Loki opened his book and began to read once more, though he couldn’t properly get back into it with the boy beside him.

“Are you just gonna sit there?”

Peter nodded his mind racing, *Running away will make him more likely to kill me, if I surprise him I’ll probably live longer.* Realizing he hadn’t said anything he spoke and his voice came out squeak, “Yes?” He cleared his throat. “Uh... what are you reading?”

“You already asked me that.”

“Oh.”

Loki gave a sigh and stood, “I’m going to read elsewhere.”

Peter started breathing normally again once he was gone.

#2 Building

“A building?” Tony repeated slowly.

Peter nodded, “Yeah, but it was empty though!” He said quickly. “So when the Vulture Guy made it fall on me no one got hurt! So you don’t have to worry!”

Tony didn’t respond as he put his head in his hands, “A building,” he said again.

“Uhuh,” Peter continued. “And then I started freaking out a bit cause I couldn’t move or anything, it was hard to breathe, and it hurt it all and then I saw my mask and my reflection and I remembered what you said!”

“What I said?” Tony echoed.

“Yeah, about if I’m ‘nothing with the suit then I shouldn’t have it’ thing. So I realized I am Spider-Man! And then I lifted the building up and escaped and went after the Vulture and then-”

“A *building* .”

“Yes, I said that already,” Peter said a bit of annoyed looking over to Tony. “A-are you okay? You look kinda pale.”

“No.”

#3 Loki and Peter

"Is that magic?"

"Yes."

"Whoa, what else can you do?"

"I don't cater to the requests of children, I'm sure Stark is looking for you anyway."

"He'll get over it! Please Mr. Loki! Your magic is awesome! I mean how did you learn it? Was it fun? God you're so cool!"

"Awesome...? Cool...?"

"Yeah!"

Loki cleared his throat and stood up a bit straighter, "Well I suppose I can show you some magic for a bit... I'm especially good at illusions and shapeshifting."

#4 Ned

"How are you son?"

"I'm fine Mr. Captain America... even though I feel like I might faint from the awesomeness of shaking your hand."

"Ah, well uh, why don't you sit down?"

"...I'm sitting in a room with the Avengers... Peter I just want to thank you for existing and being my friend."

Peter smiled, “I try.”

#5 Trash

“I’m nothing more than trash, someone take me out already.”

“Do not speak of yourself in such a way!” Thor shouted suddenly. “Young Peter I have not had the pleasure of knowing your company for long but I can assure you there is no need for you to speak of yourself in such a way. You are a clever, strong, and brave young man. A true hero at that. One who-”

“It’s just a phrase Thor,” Tony interrupted.

“You could’ve let him keep going,” Peter muttered despite his blush.

“A phrase?” Thor repeated.

“It’s something kids say,” Tony clarified.

“Why would they ever say such terrible and dehumanizing things about themselves?”

Tony shrugged, “They’re teenagers, Thor. It’s the aesthetic.”

#6 Sick

“I’m fine Tony...”

“No you’re not.”

“Honestly you look worse than I feel. Did you even sleep?”

“He was up all night worried,” Sam told Peter. “We tried to get him to sleep, but no dice.”

“Tony,” Peter groaned before he coughed a few times. “I’ll be fine in a day or two.”

Tony didn’t look convinced, “This can’t just be a cold though. You shouldn’t be able to get colds. So what if it’s worse, huh?”

“If you are so paranoid we can watch him while you sleep Tony,” Steve offered.

“Nope,” Tony said immediately shaking his head. “I trust you all to help save the world, and cover my ass, but *not* with my kid.”

Natasha shook her head, “You’re gonna run yourself into the ground at this rate.”

“You’re turning red there Peter, all good?” Clint asked bringing all eyes back to Peter who was indeed bright red.

“Y-your kid?” Peter squeaked out.

Tony blushed immediately, “Well uh, you are well...”

“Your kid,” Peter said again sinking back into his bed’s pillows.

“Yeah...”

As the “father and son” awkwardly stared at one another the rest of the team gave each other knowing looks.

Rhodes was the first speak, in a low whisper, “I think they both short circuited.”

#7 Dance

“Tony!”

“Hey kid what’s up?” Tony asked answering he phone. “Oh by the way I unfortunately don’t think I’ll be home until after ten.”

“But I *need* you!”

“You do?”

“It’s an emergency!”

“What? What kid of emergency?”

“I have a date to the dance! And it’s *tonight!*”

Tony was silent for a moment.

“Tony?”

Tony shot up in his seat, “Someone cancel all my meetings!”

Final chapter is next!

Eight

Chapter Notes

Last One!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Eight

“It’s out of my hands,” Ms. Evans had said. “It has nothing to do with the car accident or anything- or at least that’s what they are telling me. It’s just the fact that fostering is meant to be temporary... and my superiors have found someone permanent. Of course Peter’s thoughts on them is paramount, but they are nice people...”

The words echoed in Tony’s head for what must have been the millionth time even though the conversation had only happened a few weeks ago.

“I can do this myself Tony,” Pepper said suddenly. “You can go and hang out with Peter.”

“He’s not home.”

“Is he at a friend’s house?”

“He’s meeting the family... the family that wants to *adopt* him.”

She nodded in understanding, “So that’s really happening then?”

“Yeah.”

“I’m gonna miss him. We didn’t talk too many times, but he’s definitely a good kid.”

“Me too.”

“But him meeting those people isn’t the only thing that’s bothering you.”

Tony looked up to Pepper who waited expectantly.

“It’s just that they didn’t even give me a *proper* reason.”

“I thought the reasoning was that it was temporary.”

“That’s bull, it has to be. There’s something more to it.”

She gave a slight sigh, “Tony, I’m sure that’s the only reason. It’s just that you want there to be a bigger reason so you could accept it.”

Tony was silent for a long while, his eyes not leaving the pen he spun between his fingers.
“They could’ve at least made something up, if there was a different reason I could fight it.”

“Maybe that’s why they did it this way,” Pepper suggested. “I don’t know much about how this all works, but from what I can tell for sure is that you are good for Peter. And to me at least, an even more important fact is that he’s good for you.”

“I never thought I’d get so attached to him.”

“I did.”

Tony looked up at her with surprise, “You did?”

“I know you Tony, and I know when you’re determined. And when it comes to Peter? You’re more than determined to do anything to give the kid a good life. You’ll think of a way to-”

“It doesn’t matter what I think,” Tony cut in. “It’s Peter’s choice, and considering he’s meeting that family right now? I have a pretty good guess what his choice is.”

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“How was it?”

Peter poked at the food on his plate, “Nice.”

“That’s all?”

“Good cooks.”

“I see they already got me beat then,” Tony had meant it as a joke, but it certainly wasn’t received as one.

“I filled up earlier,” Peter said standing. “I should go finish my homework.”

“Oh okay... well uh, call me if you need help or something.”

Peter didn’t respond.

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“Are you sure you don’t want help packing?” Tony asked moving to look into Peter’s room. Boxes covered some free space, the things Tony had bought for him were slowly disappearing from their places and ending up in them.

“I’m fine,” Peter replied folding a shirt and sticking it in a box. “Ned helped me a bit when he was here earlier.”

“Oh... I assume you two are gonna keep in contact?”

“Yeah, Ned is great. And I’ll miss him, I hope I can still go to Midtown. Decathlon has a big match coming up...”

“Well if you stay there I’ll be sure to keep my promise and go watch it.”

“Thanks.”

Tony wanted to say something more when his phone rang and he gave a sigh as he pulled it out. “I hope I’ll be home for dinner.”

“Bye.”

“Bye.”

~~~~~

“He’s leaving me Lee,” Tony stated sitting on KJ’s counter despite Lee’s frown. “Right now he’s in our home packing up the last of his stuff. Come morning he’s gone. *Gone* . What the hell am I supposed to do?”

“You can get off that.”

“He’s leaving us Lee! Don’t you get that?”

The young woman nodded as she readjusted some prizes in the case, “People do that,” she said quietly.

Tony paused taking in her lack of energy, the dark circles under her eyes made it seem as if she hadn’t slept in a while and her hands seemed to shake as she worked.

“Hey Lee!”

Lee jerked suddenly at the sound as a small group of teenagers came in and Tony watched her give a forced smile and start small talk.

“Are you okay?” Tony asked her when the group had walked off.

Lee began to busy herself with cleaning the section Tony wasn't sitting on, “What would you do if I sold this place?”

Tony froze for a moment, “First and foremost I'd wonder, why?”

“What if I leave you? What if I leave like Peter will?”

Tony bit back the responses he really wanted to say, “If you're happy that's what's important.”

“That's not what your thinking.”

“It's not, what I'm thinking is what is up with you? You know you can talk to me, right?" When she didn't respond Tony frowned slightly as he started to understand, "Is your dad worse?"

Lee stopped her frenzied cleaning a sad smile on her face, “Depends on your views on life... he's dead...”

Tony took a deep breath as he digested this, “When?”

Lee gave a sniffle, “Two nights ago.”

“And you're here working?”

Lee shook her head as a few tears escaped, “I don't know what else to do. I feel so mad and upset and yet so *numb* ... I-I knew it was coming. I've known for a long time but- but it doesn't make it easier. I- I...”

Lee trailed off as sobs took her and she moved to hug Tony who hopped off the counter to return the embrace.

“Lee I’m so sorry. And I can h-”

She shook her head, “I’ve never taken your charity before and I’m not starting now.” She took a few deep breaths and wiped at her eyes as pulled away from Tony. “And I’ve already made up my mind. I’m going to sell this place... I’m only here ‘cause I dropped everything to come back and help him. If I sell each of the games and then space... maybe I can finally afford go back and finish school.”

Tony thought for a moment. “Well then I’ll have to buy them. If not the whole place.”

“No Mr. S, I can't let you do that.”

“And why not?”

“Because I am going to choose who I sell to. If you really want I’ll sell you a few games. But only a few.”

Tony gave a chuckle and shook his head, “There’s not enough like you out there Miss Jacobs.”

She gave a smile, “And none like you.”

They lapsed into a comfortable silence listening to the sounds of the outdoors versus the sounds of the games indoors. Tony almost wanted to laugh at the absurdity of it all, he had found this place by accident and it had become such an important place in his life, not just because he liked the games. But because of the way he was allowed to leave reality for a few short moments, because of the person who Lee was, because it was here he met Peter. And soon he’d have none of those things anymore. It was strange to think that if it hadn’t rained, if he had gotten in the car sooner, if he had had an umbrella he never would’ve walked in KJ’s, and this none of those things would’ve mattered anyway.

“Mr. S?” Lee asked finally.

“Hmm?”

“You want Peter to stay right?”

“Yes,” Tony answered immediately.

“And Peter *wants* to go, right?”

“Why else would he be packing his things?”

“But did you ever actually ask him if he wanted to stay? Did you ever think he might be waiting for you to tell him that it’s okay to stay?”

Tony’s mouth opened and closed thrice before he was out the door and running down the street like a mad man. His heart beat like a drum in his chest with each step and each breath he took. He ignored the strange looks he got as he rushed into the lobby, and took the elevator up to his and Peter’s floor. He bounced on the balls of his feet during the ride before he rushed out and hurried to Peter’s room where he fixed himself in the doorway staring at Peter who spoke to Ms. Evans as he packed a box. Both looked up as he came in.

“Are you okay, Tony?” Peter asked him.

“I’m fine, I just wanted to ask-” the words died in his throat immediately, as a thought over took him. *What if Lee was wrong?*

“Tony?”

“I uh, I forgot it,” Tony shrugged awkwardly. “How are things going here?”

Peter frowned, “I’m on the last box... um about my *suit*... the one I bought for the expo? What should I do with it? Since I mean we aren’t going to the expo anymore.”

Tony’s eyes flickered to Ms. Evans, “K-keep it. It’s yours.”

Peter nodded slowly but respond.

Tony frowned and shook his head he'd never know unless he asked. He took a deep breath and then turned to Ms. Evans, "Ms. Evans?"

"Yes?" The woman asked looking at him expectantly.

Tony cleared his throat, "What- what if- I know it's late to be asking this, but what if Peter stayed here? I- I could- I could adopt him?"

"Tony?" Peter said slowly looking up to Tony with surprise in his eyes.

Tony looked to Peter with an apologetic smile, "I'm sorry Pete, I just assumed what you wanted without asking. You never told me that you wanted to stay, and I hadn't been smart enough to *ask* you to stay before. So it might be a bit late, but do you? Do you want to stay here with me?"

Peter slowly stood and Tony could see tears welling in his eyes, "I can stay?"

Tony nodded, "I did tell you this was your home now. I'm not going back on that."

Tony barely had the time to brace himself before Peter grabbed him in a tight hug. Tony couldn't stop himself from smiling as he hugged the boy back, nor he could stop the tears in his eyes.

"I'm sorry it took so long Peter," he whispered into the boy's hair.

Peter shook his head slightly before he pulled back enough to look over to Ms. Evans, "I can stay can't I?"

The woman gave a smile, "I'll make some calls."

Tony watched Peter smile through his tears and as he pulled the kid- *his son* in for another hug he silently vowed to make that smile last as long as he could.

~~*The End*~~

## Chapter End Notes

Thank you so so so much for reading this! I absolutely loved writing this. I have an urge for more Dad!Tony so there is a slight chance of me posting some one shots or something. We shall see I don't know yet.

Either way,

THANK YOU

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!